

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4739

INFO AMEMBASSY LISON

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENNA 1066

E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJECT: AUSTRIAN SOCIALIST'S COMMENTS ON PORTUGAL

1. AUSTRIAN MP KARL CZERNETZ, WHO CHAIRS POLITICAL COMMITTEE ON COUNCIL OF EUROPE (COE) AND IS ACTIVE IN SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL (SI), TOLD EMBASSY LABATT FEB 5 THAT ACCORDING TO HIS CONTACTS IN PORTUGUESE SOCIALIST PARTY (FONMIN SOARES IS CLOSE FRIEND) ONLY EARLY AND HONEST ELECTIONS CAN PREVENT EXPLOSION IN PORTUGAL. HE SAID OVERT WESTERN INTERVENTION NOW WOULD BE DISASTEROUS, BUT SHOULD ELECTIONS NOT BE HELD AND FOR THAT OR OTHER REASON CIVIL WAR SOARES WARNED OF OCCUR, WHOLE SITUATION WOULD CHANGE; EACH COUNTRY WOULD HAVE TO CHOOSE HIS SIDE AND GIVE ALL SUPPORT POSSIBLE.

2. ACCORDING TO CZERNETZ, PORTUGUESE COMMUNISTS REALIZE THAT, HAVING FAILED TO SECURE ELECTIONS IMMEDIATELY AFTER COUP WHEN ORGANIZATION AND FUNDING GAVE THEM BIG ADVANTAGE, THEY NOW NEED TIME TO EXTEND ORGANIZATION AND CONTROL INTO RURAL AREAS WHERE TRADE UNIONS THEY DOMINATE DO NOT REACH. PORTUGUESE SOCIALISTS BELIEVE ELECTIONS WILL PROVIDE BASIS FOR REVERSING RECENT GOP
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ACTIONS FAVORING COMMUNISTS, SUCH AS COMPULSORY

UNIFICATION OF TRADE UNIONS, AND GIVE DEMOCRATIC FORCES REASONABLE HOPE OF COMBATTING COMMUNIST INTIMIDATION AND STRONG-ARM TACTICS. (CZERNETZ LIKENED COMMUNISTS' METHODS TO THOSE USED IN HUNGARY AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA AFTER WWII, COMMENTING FURTHER THAT COMMUNISTS HAVE NOT CHANGED; DETENTE IS FACADE.)

3. ASKED WHAT CHANCES OF CIVIL WAR WERE, CZERNETZ SAID SOARES' WARNING SHOULD BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY; SPLIT EXISTED WITHIN ARMED FORCES IN SPITE OF DENIALS. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT EVEN PORTUGUESE SOCIALISTS DO NOT KNOW PRECISE COMPOSITION OF RULING ARMED FORCES GROUP OR POLITICAL TENDENCIES OF THOSE THEY KNOW.

4. ASKED WHAT HELP EUROPEANS WERE GIVING DEMOCRATIC FORCES IN PORTUGAL, CZERNETZ REPLIED COE PRESIDENT HAS WRITTEN PRESIDENT COSTA GOMEZ REQUESTING GOP TO INVITE COE POLITICAL FACTIONS TO SEND DELEGATIONS TO OBSERVE PREPARATIONS FOR APRIL ELECTIONS. HOPEFULLY, THIS COULD HELP INSURE FAIRNESS WHILE ABSENCE ON ELECTION DAY WOULD OBTAIN CHARGES OF TUTELAGE OF INTERFERENCE. HE SAID SOCIALISTS NEED MONEY AND, ESPECIALLY, SUPPLIES TO COMPENSATE FOR UNLIMITED RESOURCES SOVIETS PROVIDED COMMUNISTS. SOCIALISTS HAD SURFEIT OF VOLUNTARY HELP BUT TOO LITTLE TO WORK WITH. CZERNETZ COULD NOT PROVIDE ANY FIGURES ON WEST EUROPEAN'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO PORTUGUESE SOCIALISTS, THERE BEING NO COORDINATED WEST EUROPEAN EFFORT.

5. COMMENT: WHILE CZERNETZ LEFT IMPRESSION WEST EUROPEANS' AID TO PORTUGUESE SOCIALISTS WAS MORE EXHORTATIVE THAN SUBSTANTIAL, IMPLICATION WAS CLEAR THAT HE HOPED HELP APPROPRIATE TO NEED AT TIME WOULD BE FORTHCOMING FROM OTHERS. HUMES

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